

TOMBIGBEE RIVER BRIDGE
State Highway 182 spanning Tombigbee River
Columbus
Lowndes County
Mississippi

HAER No. MS-13

HAER
MISS
44-COLUM,
24-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

TOMBIGBEE RIVER BRIDGE

HAER No. MS-13

HAER
MISS
44-COLUM,
24

Location: State Highway 182 Connection spanning Tombigbee River
Channel on the West edge of Columbus, Mississippi

Universal Transverse Mercator
Coordinates: U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute Columbus South
(33088-D4-TF-024) 1,393,250 North 621,600 East

Date of Construction: 1927

Engineer: Mississippi Highway Department

Builder: S. J. Riley, Columbus, Mississippi

Present Owner: Lowndes County, Mississippi

Present Use: None

Significance: The bridge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places
in 1988.

Report Prepared by: Dell Coward, P.E.
Engineering Plus, Inc.
P.O. Box 763
Columbus, MS 39703

Date: March 1995

TOMBIGBEE RIVER BRIDGE
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The bridge over the Tombigbee River at Columbus, Lowndes County, Mississippi was built in 1927 by the Mississippi State Highway Department (Mississippi Department of Transportation). It was built as a Federal Aid Project No. 60-A. The bridge linked U.S. Highway 82 with First Avenue (Main Street) on the east side of Columbus, Mississippi. The bridge was a replacement of an existing county bridge built in 1878. The 1927 bridge was part of a major artery of East-West traffic across North Mississippi.

The bridge is 604' long, consisting of eight reinforced concrete girder spans, two 90' pony steel trusses, and one steel swing truss span. The spans rest on concrete piers. The bridge carries two ten foot traffic lanes and a three foot pedestrian walkway on the North side. The driving surface was timber with an asphalt overlay.

The swing span operated manually with a capstan. Operating the capstan turned the swing span ninety degrees to the roadway and created an opening for river traffic to pass through. River traffic had died out at the time the bridge was built and the anticipated renewal never materialized. It is believed that the swing span was never used other than the testing required for project completion.

The bridge was built under contract to the Mississippi State Highway Department with the use of federal funding. Estimated cost was approximately \$145,000. The cost was raised to approximately \$165,000 with the addition of a

lighting system. S. J. Riley was the contractor and construction began in 1925. The project engineer for the Highway Department was C. L. Roshore. The construction was slow and ran past the time limit. Construction was further delayed when a steel beam fell killing S. J. Riley in November of 1926. The bonding company, Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company completed the job. The bridge was opened to traffic on May 14, 1927.

This bridge continued to carry the bulk of the East-West traffic through the area until the mid 1970s when a new bypass was constructed north of the bridge. The bridge continued to carry local traffic.

In 1985, the Corps of Engineers cut the highway 1 1/2 miles West of the bridge for the Tennessee Tombigbee Waterway. This created an island with the bridge as the only vehicular access. The island contained several small businesses, residences, and an industrial park.

The 1986 bridge inspection determined that the bridge could not safely carry 80,000 truck loads to and from the industrial park. A 1989 underwater inspection found the main pier to be severely undermined by erosion. The bridge was closed to two way traffic and made a one lane bridge to lessen the load until a new bridge could be constructed.

The bridge was placed under the jurisdiction of Lowndes County in 1989. The county, through the State Aid Division of the Mississippi Department of Transportation, constructed a new bridge using federal, state and local funding.

The new bridge was opened to traffic in September of 1993. The old bridge was closed to all traffic for safety and liability reasons .

Bibliography

Newspapers

The Daily Commercial Dispatch. Columbus, Mississippi

May 30, 1926

June 2, 1926

November 17, 1926

December 12, 1926

May 9, 1927

May 15, 1927

Construction drawings available at the office of the Mississippi Department of Transportation, Jackson, MS.

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